

Pump Up Your Speaking Voice with a Strength Training Workout

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Does your voice convey confidence and conviction every time you speak?

Or does your voice need strength training?

A *Six Minutes* reader whose career depends on a strong, confident voice sent in this question:

“One thing I need help in is voice control. For some reason my voice quivers. Is there some kind of exercise that may strengthen my vocal cords? Any ideas what may contribute to that?”

Also, as a Realtor, I encounter the quivery voice as I’m talking with my clients and it conveys an impression of not being sure of what I’m saying.”

Your Speaking Voice

The voice is made up of muscles, cavities, tissues, nerves, fluids, etc., just like the rest of you. It can produce at least 325 different pitches. There are more nerves in the muscles of the larynx than any other muscles in your body, with the exception of your eyes. In addition, you use three quarters of your body when you speak a word, and even a stubbed toe can affect the sound of your voice. So it’s not surprising that your voice can be adversely affected by excitement and stress.

Just as with the rest of your body, some people naturally have more vocal strength, while others need to pump up theirs just to keep up with their daily vocal requirements. I cannot know the exact cause of the reader’s quivers without speaking with them, but it is likely that the cause of their quivering voice is either nerves, or lack of vocal strength, or both. Regardless of the case, voice training using proper vocal exercises can make a world of difference in both control and endurance in the voice.

Unless you are a voice practitioner, or have studied with a voice professional (which I highly recommend!) you may not know what proper vocal exercises are. So here is a mini-workout that you can use every day to get your voice in shape and get control of those tremors, quivers, and flips when you speak.

A Strength Training Workout for Your Voice

1. Breathe deeply and exhale on a hissssssing sound. Repeat 10 times.
 - Proper breathing is the foundation for a healthy voice AND control over nervous energy that can make the voice quiver.
2. Say "Mm-mmm (as in yummy) Mmm-hmm (like yes) " Repeat 5 times.
 - This develops mask resonance, which creates a clean and vibrant sound by creating a clean approximation of the cords and a resonance that will sound great and project easily.
3. Say "Mm-mmm. Mmm-hmm." up and down your vocal range, from low to middle to high and back again, 10 times.
4. Raise your volume a bit and say "Mmmmmmmmy name is..." Repeat this ten times up and down your vocal range.
 - This enhances vocal flexibility and coordination.
5. Say "Ney, ney, ney, ney, ney" loudly but without yelling 10 times up and down your vocal range.
 - This is more mask resonance training.
6. Starting at mid range, make a siren sound with Oooo and Eeeee by sliding down your vocal range several times, starting higher each time.
 - Again, the focus here is on more flexibility and coordination.
7. Say "Mmmmmmm" until you feel a buzzy sensation in the front of your face. Repeat 5 times.
 - Mask resonance again.
8. Now, for isolation of muscles for articulation, try some tongue twisters like those below. To get the full workout, say them each several times but only as fast as you can go and keep them clear. You can increase your speed over time:
 - The blue bluebird blinks.
 - Three free throws.
 - What time does the wristwatch strap shop shut?
 - Strange strategic statistics.
 - Freshly fried flying fish, freshly fried flesh.

9. To bring it all together, speak a few sentences out loud. Use an opening or closing of a talk, a favorite poem or long quote, or song lyrics.
10. Every good workout needs a cool down. End with 5 more big, deep breaths.

Vocal Delivery Article Series

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- **Vocal Strength Exercises**
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Taking Your Vocal Workout to the Next Level

The workout above will help you get some awareness of your voice and start to strengthen it. To go to the next level, I recommend the following:

- **Practice your speeches out loud.**
- Warm up your voice everyday, but especially before public speaking. Ideally, spend as much time practicing as you will in front of an audience.
- Learn to breathe properly and apply that technique to your public speaking.
See [Breathing: The Seductive Key to Unlocking Your Vocal Variety](#)
- Hum a lot. Explore and develop mask resonance.
See [Speak Up! A Guide to Voice Projection](#)
- Take a singing class or private singing lessons. This is true strength training for your voice.

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Kate Peters is a singer/actor, voice coach, speaker, and the author of [Can You Hear Me Now? Harnessing the power of your vocal impact in 31 days](#). Through her presentations,

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